

**Remarks by the Hon. Warren L. Miller**  
**Chairman, U.S. Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad,**  
**upon signing the**  
**Agreement Between the United States of America and Montenegro**  
**on the Protection and Preservation of Certain Cultural Properties**  
**October 16, 2008 \* Washington, DC**

Minister Micunovic, Under Secretary Glassman, Ambassador Vlahovic, Commission members, and Guests –

On behalf of the Government of the United States, I want to express my sincere appreciation to the Government of Montenegro and its leaders for their efforts in reaching this Agreement. I especially want to thank the Ambassador for his personal involvement.

The Agreement commits our governments to protect, assist preservation efforts, and prevent discrimination with respect to the cultural sites of all ethnic and religious groups.

The Agreement also commits our governments to work together on cultural matters, particularly with respect to the protection and preservation of sites associated with groups that were victims of genocide during World War II. It, further, provides the framework for the protection of a broad range of other cultural and historic sites.

While Montenegro is an ancient place, it is a new country. The agreement today demonstrates that the Government of Montenegro and its people take seriously the responsibilities of protecting the past and preserving the heritage of all groups, no matter their language, their faith, or their ethnicity.

They do so because they recognize that preservation of history is a link to the past as well as a reminder to the present.

Not all elements of Montenegro's past are pleasant to recall. It suffered mightily at the hands of the Italian Fascists and Nazis. Like their Serbian cousins, the Montenegrins defied their occupiers – and succumbed only because of the brutal force of the fascists.

In the 1990s, Montenegro, linked to Serbia, found itself in a region consumed by the ethnic wars that ripped apart what was once Yugoslavia.

Since then, new leaders in Montenegro, together with new leaders in Serbia, have deposed, renounced, and supported the arrest of those guilty of war crimes from the Milosevic regime.

It is noteworthy that, since 1996, Montenegro has had a multi-ethnic government. Montenegro is a nation with a history of cultural tolerance, especially when viewed in light of the troubled history of that region.

This Agreement shows that Montenegro, as an independent country, is taking on the important responsibilities of protecting its heritage -- and the heritage of all who have lived there. That is a sign of the respect its people pay to the past. And it is a sign of the confidence the people of Montenegro have in their future.

Today, Montenegro and the United States look forward to working together in affirming the facts and lessons of history. Today, we acknowledge and commit to the principal that whenever ethnic and religious hatred are whipped up against a certain group, it is the duty of all free nations to oppose such tyranny and to protect the innocent. Today, our nations form a strong bond, a bond of responsibility, to remember the horrors of the past, so that they do not occur again.

Thank you and congratulations!